



Seattle Office for Civil Rights

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Public Accommodations Facts

The City of Seattle protects people from discrimination on public accommodations. Unlawful discrimination may be occurring if you are treated differently from others in similar circumstances because of your:

- race
- religion
- political ideology
- marital status
- gender identity
- color
- disability
- creed
- parental status
- use of service animal
- sex
- sexual orientation
- national origin
- ancestry

What is a Place of Public Accommodations? Examples:

Hotels, restaurants, theaters, arenas, shopping centers, hospitals, recreational facilities, government services, and transportation services, such as buses, taxis, and car rental.

Examples of Unfair Practices

A restaurant refuses to serve a disabled customer with a service animal.

An inn refuses to offer lodging to a gay couple.

A health spa discourages an African American from applying for membership.

If you've faced similar treatment in the last six months within the Seattle city limits, the Seattle Office for Civil Rights (SOCR) may be able to investigate.

Please note: SOCR acts as a neutral fact finder and does not act as an advocate for either side in a discrimination case.

What you can do if you think you've been discriminated against

1. Write down exactly what was said, actions taken, dates, times, persons involved, and witnesses. Documentation is very important.
2. Call SOCR at (206) 684-4500 or (206) 684-4503 TTY. Find out what your choices are and who can help you. An investigator can answer your questions.
3. After a decision is made to file and sign a complaint, an investigator will be assigned to your case.
4. If both parties are willing, SOCR can use our Facilitated Resolution Process (FRP) to work with them to resolve differences.
5. If FRP is not used or is unsuccessful, SOCR will begin an investigation and gather information from both sides to determine whether or not discrimination took place.

If SOCR finds that no discrimination occurred, you can appeal within 30 days to the Seattle Human Rights Commission for further review.

If SOCR finds that discrimination did occur, SOCR will try to negotiate a settlement between both parties. If the parties do not reach settlement, SOCR can take further legal action.

A word about retaliation

The City of Seattle prohibits any negative action—including harassment, intimidation, threats, or creating a hostile environment—taken against a person who files a complaint, or a person who comes forward to provide information about a complaint.

This document is available in alternative formats upon request.